

REHEARSAL.

1. God judgeth no Man, but by Man. The necessity of a Priesthood upon Earth.
2. Men will be Priests in Heaven.
3. The Efficacy of the Censures of the Church. That Neither Innocence nor Repentance, will Avail before God, in Opposition to the Church.
4. The Case of the Ignorant, and Malicious in this Matter.
5. Extending the Priesthood to All, Destroys the Whole. As likewise the De-
riving it from the People.

WEDNESDAY, January 1st. 1707.

Country man. **T**His is New-Years-Day. GOD send us a Good New-Year, to the Beating down of *Deism, Heresie, and Schism*. And some will think it *NEW-DOCTRIN* that you are Preaching to me, with which you Begin the Year. What! Bring us back from the *Green Boughs of Nature*, to the *Dry Hebrew Roots of Scripture*, and the *Wither'd Branches of Revelation*, which we have been *Paw-nawing and Battelling* so many Years, with *Success and Impurity*! These Scriptures (says they) speak in so *High and Lofly a Strain*, that ther is no *Enduring* them! They are all for *Church, and High-Church*! They bear down *Priest-Craft* upon us *Irresistably*!

(1.) Especially the Text you Quoted in the Conclusion of your Last, the fifth of *St. John*, Ver. 22. and 27. where *Christ* says, *That God judgeth no Man, but hath Committed all Judgment to the Son*. And the Reason given Affects them more Closely, *Because he is the Son of Man*. It is not said, because he is the Son of God. As if all whatever of *GOD's Judgements* were to be Dispens'd by the Hand of *Man*. Then in Corroboration of this, you brought Texts which said, *That the Saints shall Judge the World, and the Angels*; which sets them very *High* indeed! Even to *Sit with Christ* in His *Throne*! As He has Promis'd *Rev. iii. 21*. And that they shall be *Priests of God* and of *Christ*, and shall *Reign with Him*. *Chap. xx. 6*. How then comes the Name of *Priest* to be now so *Contemptible*! Is it the *Glory* of the *Happy State*, and of the *Church Tri-umphant*; And is it the *Refuse and Off-Scur-ring* in the *Church Militant*? And if *Men* will be *Priests in Heaven*, may they not be so upon *Earth*? Have we not more need of *Guides and Assistance* now, to *Preach the Word of God* to us, and to *Administer His Holy Sacraments*, which He has Ordain'd as *Means of Grace*, to bring us to the *Eternal Glory*?

(2.) And if (as you have shew'd) God

from the Beginning of the World, hath Dispens'd His Blessings by the hands of *Men*, and sent men to His *Prophets*, and to his *Priests*, to *Intercede* for them, and to make *Atonement* for their *Sins*; And that the Last Judgment will be Pronounc'd by the Mouth of a *Man*, and that *God judgeth no Man, but Mediatly*, by the *Intervention of Man*; how is it Now, That we *Despise* the *Intervention of Man*, or any *Priesthood* in the hands of a *Man*; and *Ridicule* the very *Office*! Tho' *Christ* bears it now in His own *Person* in *Heaven*. And that it is the *Highest Glory* to which we shall be *Advanc'd* in *Heaven*. We *Approach* not to *GOD* There, but by the *Mediation of Man*: And *Christ* will have *Priests* under Him There, to *Administer* in those *Means of Mediation*. Yet *Men* upon *Earth* think they Can go to *God* Immediatly, without any *Mediation* at all, or the *Intervention* of any *Outward Means* or any *outward Priesthood*. Which is to say, That they are *More Perfect* Now than they will be, *Then*, and are *Nearer* to *God*, as having less use of *Means*, or the *Intervention* of any other *Priesthood* than what every *Man* Carries within his own *Breast*, that is, his *Conscience*, which *Absolves* or *Condemns* him, as his *Actions* are *Good* or *Evil*. And therefore need not the *Absolution* of any *Priest*, nor need *Fear* his *Condemning*. And so the *Power* of the *Keys* go's for nothing with them. This is what was Quoted in your Last out of the *Book of Rights*, p. 73. *That if God will not Reward a Good, nor Punish an Ill Man, more or less for their (the Clergy's) Decree; what can be more Absurd than to Call that a Judicial Power, which has no manner of Effect or Operation?* Ther was more Quoted, to which you Answer'd, but you spoke not so Particularly to these words, tho' you Explain'd the Matter of a *Declaratory* and *Judicial* Powerfully to my Satisfaction, which do's in Effect imply an Answer to the whole. But if you Please to make it more *Express*, and Answer that Question Directly, whether *God* will *Reward* or *Punish* more or Less for the *Excommunication* or *Absolution* of the *Church*? And if

not

not, then to shew what Effect or Operation the Power of the Keys has. For this seems the Whole of the Cause, and Put as Strong as it can be.

(3.) *Rehearsal.* My Answer is Directly, That God will Reward and Punish more or less, according to the Censures of the Church. And my Reason is, because God will Reward our Obedience to the Church, and Punish our Neglect of Her. To make which more Plain, let us put the Case both ways. 1st. That a Man is Excommunicated, *Clave Errante*, either for an Unsuccessful Cause; or upon False Evidence. 2^{dly}, That a Man Justly under Censure for a Crime that Deserves it, becomes truly Penitent for the Crime, and thinking that Sufficient, Despises or Neglects his Reconciliation to the Church, by a Due Submission, and to be Absolv'd from her Censure.

In the first Case, a Man is Oblig'd to Pay all Deference to the Authority of the Church (as to Civil Authority in the like Case) and to Plead his Innocence in all Modest and Respectful Manner, without Reviling or Reproaching, even tho' he be Judg'd Contrary to the Law. Which Case is fully Rul'd, *Act xxiii. 3, 4, 5*. If he do otherwise, he is under the Sentence of God, for his Disobedience to the Church, let him be never so Innocent as to the Crime laid to his Charge, as St. Paul was, yet Condemns himself for uttering the least Reproachful word to the High-Priest, tho' Commanding him to be Smitten, Contrary to the Law. But if after all Modest Defence, a Man is thus Innocently put under the Censure of the Church; such Sentence is made *Clave Errante*, and no Doubt will be Revers'd by the Supreme Judge who knoweth the Heart.

Now as to the Second Case, I Answer, That a Man cannot be said to be truly Penitent, if he Refuses to own his Crime, and Submit himself to the Censure of the Church. And God will not Remit his Crime, tho' he be Sorry in his Heart he has committed it, but will Retain his Sin, and Ratify the Sentence of the Church, while he continues in his Obstinacy against the Church.

So that in this Case of Obstinacy to the Church, neither your Innocence will Excuse you before God, nor your Repentance Avail you, unless you Repent likewise of your Obstinacy against the Church, and Submit your self. You cannot be Reconcil'd to God, while you stand out Obstinately against His Church. For He will Maintain His own Institutions. And he that Expects to go to Heaven any other way than that which God hath Appointed, makes Himself Wiser than God, and may find his Folly when it will be too Late.

Country-m. This Power given to the Church is indeed very Great. And, as you have Explain'd it, none will be Admitted into Heaven, who stand out in their Obstinacy against the Authority of the Church upon Earth.

(4.) But, Master, what (*Alas!*) will become of the Multitudes of poor People among Us, who have no Notion at all of this matter, or have any other Regard for Excommunication than the Temporal Penalties that are Annex'd to it by the Law?

Rehears. What Allowances God will make for Extreme Ignorance, I will not Determine. His Mercy is over all His Works. But for those who Offend of Malicious Wickedness, who Obstinately Break off from the Church, and Despise her Authority, who Place themselves in the Seat of Scorners, and turn every thing that is Sacred into Ridicule, these are in the Gail of Bitterness, and their Condition is most Desperate. St. Jude Describes them, as those who Despise Dominion, and speak Evil of Dignities—Which they Understand not. By which he did not mean the Roman Emperor or the Civil Government. For he speaks of their Perishing in the Gainsaying of Korah. Which was Gainsaying the Authority of the Priesthood. And upon the very same Pretext as this Book of the Rights, which is, That the People are Holy, and the Priesthood did Lord it over them. Thus Argu'd the Korahites against Aaron and the Priests. Num. xvi. 3. Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are Holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord? Which Argument is Copy'd and Insisted upon all over this Book of the Rights. And I will give him the Answer that Moses gave to Korah, What are these Priests, that you Murmur against them? Your Rebellion is against the Lord. It is against the Institution of God, it is against the Lord and against His Anointed, that these Men have Conspir'd, saying, Let us break their Bonds asunder, and Cast away their Cords from us.

(5.) They wou'd Destroy the Priesthood, by making All Men Priests, and equally meant in that great Commission given by Christ to His Apostles. Upon which I might well Ask them St. Paul's Question, Are all Apostles? If so, then Christ did not Give some Apostles, and some Prophets, &c. But the Book of the Rights makes the People give All, and Christ Nothing. He makes the People the only Original of the Priesthood, and of every thing else, as we shall see hereafter.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, containing a full and Impartial Account of the Revolution in that Kingdom, begun in 1567. Faithfully Publish'd from an Authentick M S. By Her Majesty's Historiographer for the Kingdom of Scotland.

THE Establishment of the Church, the Preservation of the State.

A Collection of papers concerning what hath been Transacted in the Convocation.

A Warning for the Church of England.

The Principles of the Dissenters concerning Toleration and Occasional Conformity.